

THE CHALLENGE OF THE BLACK CHURCH
A Black Man's Ministry to an Integrated Church

A SENIOR ESSAY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE MASTER OF DIVINITY DEGREE

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INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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An urgent assessment of the direction of the Black church by black ministers is in dire need. The mood of the day, of black people being systematically and deliberately prevented by the institutional life of America from moving into the heart of its livelihood, makes this urgent assessment imperative. Furthermore, this assessment becomes unavoidable and pressing because of the reaction of black America to this grotesque denial. Black people having been denied admission into the main stream of American life and their reaction to this obstruction, dictates this badly needed understanding of the direction of the Black Church by black ministers. As I am now the minister of a congregation that is approximately one-tenth white and the rest black in a black community, I am compelled to seek to understand my ministry in the light of the black experience in an integrated church. I am compelled by the barrier constructed by the system and specifically by the mentality of White Anglo-Saxon religion to be as clear in my mind as I can be of my obligations to my black and white brothers as revealed to me by God.

The church that I am serving is a church and a neighborhood recreation center, at least this is its intent. Presently the recreation center is by far more active than the church is. The background out of which this church and recreation center comes is not as important as is the present attitude of the sponsoring body. The sponsoring body

consists of two predominately white churches; the Presbyterian Church in the United States, better known as the Southern Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Church. Both parties of the sponsoring body are not yet prepared to accept the black participants of my church on equal grounds with the white participants. Moreover, both sponsoring bodies pulled out of the community when it became a black community. Sometime later, both Denominations, which had been serving the community separately, attempted to come back into the community in a joint venture. Such a venture meant that a board had to be established, composed of members from both Denominations, to be in charge of the oversight of the community church and Christian center. The members of this joint board, predominantly white, lived out of the community with the exception of the two directors of the church and center. The only connection the joint board had to the community was through the directors. At least for three years this has been the status of this joint board. The white participants of the worshipping congregation also are from other communities, usually suburbia.

So, it is out of this very unnatural integrated setting and the Black Experience that I must come to grips with my ministry. This unnatural setting is so because, first, the two Denominations allowed the two white congregations to abandon the community when it became black, giving the impression that they, the Southern Presbyterian and Episcopal churches, just were not interested in black people. Second, there were no black indigenous members of the community appointed to the joint board that administered the center and church. Third, the

white participants of the worshipping congregation who make it an integrated setting, live elsewhere other than in the community where the church and center are located. But the black participants are members of the immediate community. The fourth point that makes, or would make this situation an unnatural integrated setting is the selection of two white men as directors of the church and center. This was exactly the practice during slavery when a black church was permitted to exist and a white person or persons were put in charge of the church.¹

So it is out of my particular involvement in my church setting and out of the historical struggle of the black man and his church that I see my concern. My concern includes more than just a black man's ministry to an integrated church but also the challenge of the Black church. The attempt to think through the challenge of the Black church is really an effort at redefining Black Ministry. Regardless of whatever title is given this essay, the ultimate purpose here is to think through my ministry out of the American Black Experience and out of my own experiences.

Just what is my ministry to be in this day and time? This question is raised out of my encounter with other men and out of my efforts of trying to understand what other men are saying as a result of their encounter with each other. More accurately, this question comes out of the black experience in this country which started in 1619, when the first black man was brought to the United States in bondage.

¹E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Church in America (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 19.

Other black men, just as myself, are voicing the same or similar questions within themselves. I would imagine that black ministers from the time of domination by the European influence have had to confront just such questions. For black men, since the domination by the Western Civilization, have been steeped in contradiction and a struggle for survival. The black man has been told by the Western Civilization that he is less than human, yet within each black man there is something telling him that he is a man, that he is a child of God. Being told that he is not really human, yet at the same time something within keeps saying that he is human and a child of God is a contradiction.

It is out of this contradiction in the life of the black man and precisely out of my own contradiction in my life that I attempt to address myself to the task of redefining black ministry and in so doing state the challenge of the Black church. For the only place where this task can really be tackled is in the Black church, because the white church has not experienced this contradiction and suffering as a result of the contradiction. The Black church, regardless of what many people have and are saying about it has always come to the aid of black men. As one present day black minister has put it:

The Black Church has not always been revolutionary, but it has always been relevant to the everyday needs of black people. The old down-home black preacher who "shouted" his congregation on Sunday morning was realistically ministering to the needs of a black people who could not yet conceive of changing the conditions which oppressed them.²

When in time of slavery there was a need for some type of community,

²Albert B. Cleage, The Black Messiah (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), p. 5.

some type of family, the Black church was able to answer this need in one form or another. The only gathering of blacks permitted by the masters was at a church gathering, and this was usually worshipping under the watchful eyes of the masters or a white church. But, however it was, the Blacks were allowed to come together, in so doing, experienced a feeling of community or tribalism; and at the same time, relieved much of their pent up feelings of oppression. For the social structure that the blacks knew in Africa before being brought to America in chains was completely destroyed by the slave system. E. Franklin Frazier felt that the social cohesion was lost, and that:

the organization of laborer and the system of social control and discipline on the plantation both tended to prevent the development of social cohesion either on the basis of whatever remnants of African culture might have survived or on the basis of the Negro's role in the plantation economy.³

At every juncture when there possibly could develop some form of community, it was systematically and ruthlessly discouraged by the system. There was the factor of mobility of the slave population, better known as the slave trade. The slave, not being able to put any roots down because he never knew when he was going to be sold to another master and moved, found it impossible to establish any simulance of tribalism or community as he knew it. Another element making it impossible to form some type of community was the lack of communication among the slaves. The masters made it practically impossible for slaves to talk to each other and if they did, severe punishment would be inflicted on the slaves. Furthermore, the most elementary form of community life, the family, was

³Frazier, op. cit., p. 3.

systematically discouraged and prevented from developing. However, in view of all of these barriers to forming a community of some sort, the church was the one instrument or institution where it was possible to develop or come close to a community.⁴

The church also gave much hope in the midst of hopelessness. Many black ministers were instrumental in the escape of fugitives from slaveholding states.⁵ They preached of a better day to come when all would be free: "Children, we all shall be free when the Lord shall appear," and "...the Great Day when He should lead His dark children home."⁶ Hope was had in the spirituals of which the black minister was one of the great factors in their development. He knew what the slave lived through during the week and related his preaching to their suffering and out of both came the spirituals. Moreover, the spirituals were very much a part of the church just as the black minister was. Hope was in "Let my people go," "There's a great camp meeting in the promised Land," and others.

As the church was able to serve a definite purpose to the slave of forming some type of community, bringing the slaves closer together, so it gave aid, comfort and leadership to the black man after Emancipation. During the Reconstruction period, the black leadership that came forward came from the church, because this was where the trained black leadership was. Black ministers for the most part were the only black people who

⁴Ibid., pp. 4ff.

⁵Carter G. Woodson, The History of the Negro Church, (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1921), p. 149.

⁶W. E. B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publication, Inc. 1961), p. 147.

were able to obtain any sort of education during slavery. So it was only natural that they would play a leadership role in the Reconstruction period.

The Black Church after Reconstruction gave a message of hope to black men, particularly after the Compromise of 1877.⁷ Black ministers preached of things to come, of going to heaven and what heaven is like where all people are equal. Moreover, this was a message for that day and time, for again it seemed all hope for a better life was lost--the "night riders" (Ku Klux Klan) had started out on their work of destruction and death to restrain the Negroes' progress and virtually put them back into slavery.

This message of hope was relevant to the black man's situation of suffering and death. Black ministry has from its inception addressed itself to the needs of black men in each period of its existence. For the most part, that of having a feeling of community has been one of the primary needs of black men in their suffering. The Black Church has been at the heart and center of the black community,⁸ and now the fundamental question is, will it continue to be? But throughout the history of the Black Church, she has always held to the point that all men are children of God. It is now time again for the Black Church or Black ministry to address herself to the changing spirit of black men.

Not only because of the lie, of white superiority and black inferiority, which western culture has insisted upon and actually used

⁷Andrew E. Murray, Presbyterians and the Negro--A History, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1966), p. 156.

⁸Cleage, op. cit., p. 8.

to undergird its own manhood,⁹ but also because of the struggle for survival¹⁰ it is imperative that there be a reinterpretation of Black Ministry and thus the challenge of the Black Church. Frantz Fanon speaks to all black men when he concludes that we must not follow the European civilization to self-destruction, but that "...for ourselves, and for humanity...we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man."¹¹ Robert H. deCoy, the author of The Nigger Bible felt the need for redefining black ministry,¹² and in his efforts to do so he stated the challenge before the Black Church. These two men feel that in order for the black community to survive we must see the act of reinterpreting black ministry as a challenge. I find in my own situation of trying to maintain an integrated church in a black ghetto that the white participants will invariably try to superimpose their way of worshipping and values upon the black participants. This is especially true of the white leadership in the church and center. The effect being very little creativity from the black participants, they are for the most part only yes men. With little or no creativity there is little or no growth and where there is no growth survival is short lived. As a result of this seemingly unconscious effort on the part of these good "liberal" whites within my church, I

⁹Robert Ardrey, African Genesis, (New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc. 1961) pp. 143ff.

¹⁰George D. Kelsey, Racism and the Christian Understanding of Man, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 32.

¹¹Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, trans. by Jean-Paul Sartre (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), p. 316.

¹²Robert H. deCoy, The Nigger Bible (Los Angeles: Holloway House Publishing Company, 1967), p. 13f.

must rethink my ministry in order to face the challenge of the Black Church.

The need for a new understanding is not felt just by a few men, but men all over the country have come to this realization; so much so, that there have been conferences throughout the country for this purpose. Black men are saying that the Black church or black ministers can save this country if it is to be saved. Perhaps this is so, but one thing for sure, we must kick off the slave master's religion, faith of white superiority and black inferiority. Why? For the faith of the slave master will not permit the black man, or even himself, to be free to worship God as he should. Both the master, white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, and the slave, the black man, are slaves to the prejudice of the master. His religion has served its purpose and now it is past time to move forward with our own religion out of our own black experiences.¹³

Black people no longer feel helpless because of their blackness. No longer do we feel that we must sit and wait for God to intervene and settle our problems for us. We have learned through experience that while we are on our knees praying to God, the white man is beating our heads in. It now seems that God gives us strength for us to be about his work.

In view of the fact that we cannot escape the reality of oppressive white power or the cry for black power, which is a legitimate cry from a black powerless and frustrated people, Black ministry must reassess

¹³Gayraud S. Wilmore, "Some Problems and Possibilities for Theological Study," lecture presented at Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia, December 17, 1968.

its call to its black brothers and to brothers of all color. Black ministry having been the main stay in the survival of black men throughout their history now must become an active and creative force as it never has before, rather than a reactionary force as it has in the past. For Black ministry to move forward creatively it must break loose from the faith and belief of the slave master's religion and the religion of the liberal whites in order for it to come forward with a religion that will permit possible salvation for all men. The religion of the liberal whites is just as oppressive as that of the slave master. For the liberal seems to harbor in his mind the idea of white superiority and black inferiority. He wants the black to become like him.

Black ministry must be relevant to the black man's situation. That is, whatever condition a black man finds himself in, the black church ought to be there to help the brother help himself up. Be he hungry, out of a job, out of school, in or out of prison, left his wife and children, pregnant daughter and fatherless children, whatever the problem might be, the black minister along with his church ought to be there with a helping hand. If the problem is economical, political or social, black ministry ought and must be willing to assist the individual or group. Black ministry must provide a spirit of unity, a feeling of togetherness. In its effort of being relevant to the black man's needs and providing a spirit of unity, Black ministry must point a way to peaceful solutions of problems of black men. Any other solution other than a peaceful solution would tend to destroy black men as it has white men. Furthermore, violence must not be permitted for the same reason that a peaceful solution must be found. To permit violence by

black brothers would permit them to tumble to the level of barbarism as White ministry has allowed our white brothers to tumble, by committing itself to silence in the presence of lynchings of blacks by whites.

One of the first things that should be emphasized in the Black Church is the worth of the individual. American institutions are so constructed that a brother of color is constantly reminded that regardless of his training and exposure, he does not measure up to a white person. Not only has this been true in every walk of life out of the church but this has been and is true within the church today. A discussion was in progress between the board of a predominantly white denomination and one of its local black churches of which I am pastor. The discussion was on how to replace this board of seven whites and two blacks who were not from the community with black indigenous people. In the course of conversation one of the good white brothers, a minister at that, said that he just could not see "heathens" leading the church. It was also this same minister who is a leader in the denomination and another white minister leader of the denomination, who asked one of the white employees of this local black church to resign because his fiance was pregnant. But when there was a miscarriage, they asked the white employee to withdraw his resignation and stay on. Of course, none of this was known in the black community and the couple would have been gone before the fiance was to deliver. Of course, whites do not indulge in promiscuousness and pre-marital relations. But the point here seems to be that first, the Negroes of the community are not as well fitted as the whites are to be in a decision making position in their church, so it is maintained by some of the whites in the system. And second, regardless of the practices of one

of the head white employees, eventhough he is guilty of the same thing that many blacks are, he is better than the blacks, so the institution maintains, for he is still there.

It is understandable to ask the white employee to resign but it seems to be adding insult to injury to request that he remain, particularly in view of his leadership role with the black youth of the community and his very questionable moral life. But it seems to be a greater insult when it was requested by this white board that he remain after it became obvious that his loose moral life would not be seen, because of the miscarriage, by the black community. And to add to this insult this individual is only a high school graduate--I am sure this would not be permitted in a white community. It does seem that this particular denomination is only interested in maintaining an image of white superiority.

At this point David J. Nelson has something to say about the systems not respecting the worth of blacks:

Four hundred years ago, we were brought here in chains. After a period of training, the chains were taken off so that we could work in the fields--but we were still slaves! A little later on the Emancipation Proclamation was issued--but we were still slaves! Everytime they knock a Black man down for acting like a man, they're letting us know that we're still slaves. "Nigger, I don't care how big you get, you're still a nigger. I control the government, the laws, and the educational system--so if you want something, ask, and say please!"¹⁴

Another writer speaks of the system in terms of "the 'normal stream of American life,'" and he sees it as "...polluted beyond the bounds of purification," feeling that it is "...reeking with hatred and bigotry, and festering with racism," and that all of this has been undergirded by

¹⁴David J. Nelson, "LeRoi Jones Didn't Say, Please," Liberator, February, 1968, p. 9.

"...one hundred years of lynching, brutalization, persecution, and every form of degradation," that man was able to heap upon his fellow black man.¹⁵ Black ministry must preach self-respect and the worth of the individual if it is to be a relevant ministry. There is no other approach than through fostering self-respect within the Black church.

One high school dropout doubted his worth to such a point that he just could not see the need of going back to school because he could not make it. That is, he felt that he would be stopped in whatever he might do because he was black.¹⁶ If the Black church does not address itself to this need of black men, who will?

There is now scientific proof to support the worth of the individual,¹⁷ along with studies in the area of Anthropology¹⁸ and, of course, writings of the Old and New Testament that deal with individual worth and self-respect. The Black Church must continue but with greater emphasis that would foster self-respect within black people so that they might be what they ought to be in the Kingdom of God. It must be noted here that self-respect demands that there is respect for other men, too. Perhaps this is the reason the system shows so little respect for the black man because those of the system (the white man) have very little self-respect, which they have been without every since they were encouraged to leave Europe for one reason or another.

The Black Church and the black minister in particular must delve

¹⁵Addison Gayle, Jr., "White Experts and Black Subjects," Rights and Reviews, Fall-Winter, 1967-68, p. 30.

¹⁶A private interview with a high school dropout, Kirkwood Community Church, Atlanta, Georgia, January, 1969

¹⁷James O. Buswell, III., Slavery, Segregation and Scripture, Michigan: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 72.

¹⁸Ardrey, op. cit., pp. 1ff.

into the history of the black man so that he can understand and explain the accomplishments of black men to both black and white brothers. For the black man to have self-respect he must know the truth of his history, not half truths or outright lies of the system. Self-respect is achieved only through knowledge of self and a knowledge of and faith in God.

The second thing, the Black Church, Black Ministry, should be concerned with is not to fight white men or the system because they are white, but only because they are wrong. The Black Church should fight any system, white or black, if it is wrong. Black Ministry should not allow "colorphobia" or racism to become its faith as has happened to European churches and western civilization.¹⁹ Again, so that black brothers might be what they ought to be in the Kingdom of God, the Black Church must not fight white because it is white but only if it is wrong and any other color if it is wrong. If we are about God's work, we would not have time to fight anyone, for there is so much to be done in order for all men to live as they ought in the Kingdom of God. If we are clothing, feeding and comforting those who have these needs there just is not time to fight.

The third factor to consider in the effort to redefine Black Ministry has to do with the idea of building community. Among black people there is not much conception of community, working together to build a solid unit of people. This is most noticeable on the political scene where two black candidates run for the same office against a white person, thereby, splitting the vote and neither black man gets into

¹⁹Kelsey, op. cit., p. 9.

office. Perhaps, even more conspicuous is the high homicidal rate among blacks as compared to other ethnic groups, which is a reflection of a lack of respect and trust between black brothers. Respect and trust are elements needed to foster a feeling of community.

Furthermore, in Christianity there is a fundamental strain of individualism. Out of which came Calvin's concern for the elect, the invisible church, and the misunderstanding and modification of this concern for the elect to the idea of the individual's own ability.²⁰ The ability of the individual to be a material success in the world was an indication of his election and salvation. If the individual was a failure he then was, of course, going to hell. Salvation became a matter of an individual process and not the construction of a divine kingdom. The individual became paramount at the sacrifice of the community. Virtue of individualism such as honesty, industry, sobriety, thrift, and prudence completely overshadowed virtues of community such as solidarity, sympathy and fraternity.²¹ As the Commandments are generally taught by the church, that there are things that the individual should not do, but Moses was speaking to all of his people corporately, stating what they as a body, community should and should not do.²² Even in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was talking to a body of people and he addressed them as a community.²³ Yet the great theologians such as Schloiermacher speak in terms of the individual

²⁰J. Milton Yinger, Religion, Society and the Individual, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 562ff.

²¹Ibid., p. 457.

²²Exodus 20:1-17

²³Matthews 5:1-2

and God, the individual and Jesus Christ, the individual and salvation; it will invariably be the individual and his source of being.²⁴ The black man from his first encounter with Christianity has always been told to be humble and obey his master and he will go to heaven. The idea of community was not permitted to exist among the black people, and Christianity, north and south, black and white, did its part to maintain this lack of the idea of community. Perhaps the many different denominations that have come into existence since the Reformation will also attest to this fact of individualism.

The importance of the individual as opposed to community among black people has had its effect on family solidarity. The system encourages family break up especially if a family has to go on relief. Yet, ironically many black fathers leave home so that a welfare check might come in in order that the rest of the family will not starve. Not only does individualism tend to destroy the family unit but it also pits blacks against blacks. The whole idea of individual gain as fostered by Protestant ethics, which has been confused for Christianity, makes for individualism at the cost of other individuals.²⁵ The system has always kept blacks apart fighting each other, envying each other. If one black happens to get more than another black, someone will try to pull him down.

However, the interesting thing is that the system sees all blacks the same. If a Negro is a Presbyterian minister, he is a black

²⁴D. G. Peerman, M. E. Marty, ed., A Handbook of Christian Theologians, (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1965) pp. 17ff.

²⁵Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. by Tolcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 36.

Presbyterian minister, he is still seen as something other than a man, he is seen as less than a man. The best educated black man is not better than the worst educated white man, in fact he and the illiterate black are viewed in the same light.

As the Old Testament is concerned with community, the nation, and the New Testament is concerned with the community of believers, the church, then the Black church should emphasize community which would help to bring unity among black people which is badly needed. The concern for community would stop so much fighting between blacks. Not only that, but it would encourage family solidarity. Without family solidarity, black men are lost. Black men can progress only as a group, experience has taught us that division accomplishes nothing. But most important of all, to worship God there must be interaction between people. Black men cannot continue to worship God on an individual basis, but he must worship God in relation to his brothers. Jesus Christ said even as we have cared for the least of our brothers we have cared for Him.²⁶ So it is imperative that Black ministry insist upon worshipping in a community and not individually. God also is known only as people interact with each other.

The fourth factor, and yet one with equal importance to the other factors in redefining Black Ministry, is that there must be a dedicated leadership. This one factor can determine the failure or success of Black Ministry. Men are needed with faith in God that can move mountains, for the system is not about to change on its own, so that people, black

²⁶Matthew 25:40

or white, might be what they ought to be in God's Kingdom. The situation demands leaders that are willing to give their lives, if need be, for their brothers. We are told, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."²⁷

In an effort to state the challenge of the Black Church and redefine Black Ministry it seems that what is asked for here, is a proclamation and witnessing of the Word by the Black Church as has not been in the past. That is something that is not foreign to the Black Church, for all of the things that this paper is calling for the Black Church has done one way or another. Perhaps what is different now is that the Black Church is being asked to take the leadership rather than submit to the white church or system. If the white church wishes to follow, all well and good, if it does not than that is its problem. It is only hoped that the white church will find soul enough and will to do what it has not been willing to do in the past, namely to see the black man as a child of God and as a brother. Therefore, in view of our past history it now is the responsibility of the Black Church, Black Ministry and the laity to do what the White church has refused to do for four hundred or more years. This is the challenge of the Black Church, and the ministry of a black man even in an integrated church--to proclaim the Word as found in the Old and New Testaments, the experience of suffering, and not out of personal gain or the profit motive. I think it would be well to reflect upon Karl Barth's understanding of "God with us," as found in Isaiah 7:14; 8:8,10 and Matthew 1:21f, for us to see what is at the

²⁷John 15:13

heart of the Word that we should be talking about. Barth is of the feeling that it just did not happen that "God (is) with us,"²⁸ for God does not will to be God without us, rather He creates us to share with us, to share with us our being, life and act with His own incomparable being, life and act.²⁹ To Barth this was the special truth at the heart of the Christian message, which seems to have slipped by the White church. Here is togetherness of God and man, which is given by God and considered by Barth to be the event within all of history of the redemptive grace of God.³⁰ "God with us" is the core of the Christian message and the theme of the Christian community.³¹ We are united with God because He does not will to be God without us, He shares His history with us, and He wills that His history and our history takes place as a common history.³² Barth feels that this act of God's sharing His history with us is an act that is not for investigation or speculation, but that it is an event.³³ Only if we are witnesses of God's act do we have some knowledge of Him and understand that "God with us" says that God is, everything that is is so only through Him, in relation only to Him, from Him only and to Him only.³⁴ Our

²⁸Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV: The Doctrine of Reconciliation, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1936), p. 10.

²⁹Ibid., p. 7.

³⁰Ibid., p. 9.

³¹Ibid., p. 4.

³²Ibid., p. 7.

³³Ibid., p. 6.

³⁴Ibid., p. 6.

being, life and act is simply our history in relation to the being, life and act of God, which has its heart and end in a single act of God, known as the salvation of man by the redemptive grace of God.³⁵ But we must be ever mindful that God can not be forced and man has no claim on the redemptive grace of God, it is God's will for man to have a part in His divine being. The will, plan, and promise of God is more compelling where He is not bound and man has no claim.³⁶ In all that Barth says about God, he sees the reflection thereof in Jesus Christ.

White ministry, American Protestantism has refused its responsibility because it was more interested in money and power than in men, their needs and the community. I hope that by viewing the four factors, of self-respect, of fighting only because some one is wrong, of community, and of dedicated leadership that I and those who happen to read this paper will have a better understanding of Black Ministry redefined and the challenge of the Black Church. This paper is only a beginning in an effort to understand a black man's ministry in an integrated church. For it will take some more time and more encounters with the system and with black people in order for me to acquire the knowledge and understanding that is needed for such a task. Whether my church should remain integrated, I do not know; but if integration means assimilation as it has in the past, I would have to say it should not. However, integrated or not my basic ministry would be the same, that of witnessing and proclaiming the Word, which is the challenge of the Black Church. Really, this is the challenge of all churches, black or white.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 8f.

³⁶Ibid., p. 10

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